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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000286

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TAGS: PHUM KDEM PGOV KJUS I2

SUBJECT: BAGHDAD SUNNI NEIGHBORHOOD LEADERS COMPLAIN ABOUT
MOI HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Classified By: DEPUTY POLCOUNS ROBERT GILCHRIST FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND
(d)

¶11. (C) Summary. Three neighborhood council members representing the Sunni-dominant Doura sub-district in South Baghdad told Emboffs January 24 that Ministry of Interior abuse against

residents was a common occurrence and included alleged torture, extortion, and killings. Representatives Hashim Mahmoud, Sattar Salman Hassan, and Hamid Elwan al Rashidee (all Sunni Arab) specifically pointed the finger at MoI's national police (NP) force, particularly the Doura's Rafidain brigade led by Ghazwan al Rawi. The council members said that they received numerous complaints from released detainees formerly housed in the Rafidain brigade HQ in Doura or the Khadamiya national police facility accusing the NP of torture practices to include beatings with cable chords and mutilation of genitals. The council members noted that family members often came to them accusing the national police of asking for \$10,000 to \$30,000 US for the release of detained family members. In addition the neighborhood representatives alleged that the MoI snipers deployed to their neighborhoods were over-aggressive, shooting and sometimes killing residents haphazardly. The members expressed indignation with these alleged MoI activities and claimed that these activities were in large part to blame for the formation of gangs of Sunni youth attacking Shia dominant Iraqi Security Forces. End Summary.

A LITTLE ON DOURA

¶12. (C) Located in the South of Baghdad in Rasheed district, Doura comprises 6 distinct and majority Sunni Arab neighborhoods: Masafee, al Jazeera, al Jaza'ar, al Hader, Ruja, and Abu Shur. Doura is also known for its high concentration of Christians, particularly in al Jazeera and al Hader neighborhoods. It is an area racked by insurgent activity as well as Jaysh al-Mehdi militia involvement. The representatives estimate that the population for al Doura is 600,000 to 700,000 residents, a number of whom have been displaced or have left the country because of the high level of violence.

ALLEGED MOI TORTURE AND SNIPER ACTIVITY

¶13. (C) In a January 24 meeting, Sunni Arab Doura neighborhood council members Hashim Mahmoud, Sattar Salman Hassan, and Hamid Elwan told Emboffs that complaints of torture against the MoI National police forces, specifically the Rafidain brigade, were common and had even increased over the past few months. Among the litany of

abuse, the members said complaints included extensive beatings, often with cable chords, hanging detainees from the ceiling in unusual positions, removing detainees' clothes and subjecting them to stints of cold water treatment, and subjecting the genitals to various types of abuse as a way of affecting urinating and other capabilities. Council member Sattar Salman also indicated that the abuse focused on humiliation, for example burning half of the detainee's mustache, a practice considered extremely offensive. All of these abuses, they said, were aimed at extracting general confessions which many detainees decided to do by saying they killed individuals they knew to be alive.

¶4. (C) The council members said that numerous family members had received request by the NP members to pay out USD 10,000 to 30,000 for the release of their family members, an amount that many Doura residents were unable to pay. Hashim Mahmoud noted that many family members wanted to visit their detained relatives but that only women could safely go to visit these facilities since Sunni Arab males would either be detained or killed upon leaving the facility. In particular, the council members said that the brunt of the abuses allegedly occurs at the Khadamiya national police facility as well as the Rafidain brigade's HQ in Doura. "We are happy when we learn that someone from our neighborhood has been detained by US forces instead of MOI, because then the families do not have to worry that their loved one will be tortured or killed".

¶5. (C) Sattar Hassan told EmbOffs that the NP were responsible for conducting aggressive sniper attacks and accused them of associating with if not being infiltrated by the Jaysh al-Mahdi militia. He said the Rafidain brigade of the NOP often targeted innocent residents. Relaying a

BAGHDAD 00000286 002 OF 002

personal story that had occurred recently, Sattar said that he was with a good friend in Doura neighborhood when an alleged NP sniper shot his friend in the chest as well as 6 others in the vicinity. He said that his 40-year friend was recovering in a hospital, but was so angry about the incident that he had pledged to join the insurgency, along with his sons.

BREAKDOWN OF TRUST WITH MOI FORCES

¶6. (C) The council members noted that the Doura neighborhood advisory councils (NACs) had a specific committee composed of Shia and Sunni tribal leaders and imams whose goal is to improve security in cooperation with MoI. They praised recent conversations with MG Hussein al-Awadi, Head of the National Police directorate, but complained about the local Rafidain brigade/NP commander for Doura, Ghazwan al Rawi. Hashim Mahmoud said that he had hesitated in criticizing al-Rawi publicly, fearing for his safety, but said that the past four months over which al Rawi had assumed command of NP forces of MoI was a very bad time for Doura human-rights abuse wise.

¶7. (C) The council members asserted that MoI-led abuses were responsible for increasing sectarian violence, especially among the youth of the neighborhood who had become involved in questionable activities in response to MoI actions as well as the lack of employment and economic opportunity. Sattar Salman noted that even seasoned residents were joining insurgent groups after MoI persecution. "My good friend who was attacked and injured by MoI forces was a good man, now he has converted to the insurgency along with his sons"

COMMENT

¶8. (C). Complaints about the national police, and especially the Khadamiya detention facility, are becoming more common. Whether or not allegations about MoI sniper activity or other activities are true, Sunni Arab residents continue to feel victimized by the national police forces, and some are turning to criminal activities or even the insurgency in response.

KHALILZAD